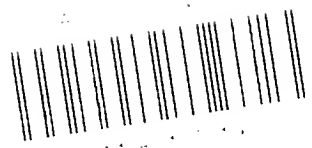


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AN ADDRESS

THE LITERARY SOCIETIES

VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE.

WILLIAM L. G. W.

AN ADDRESS
DELIVERED BEFORE
THE LITERARY SOCIETIES
OF THE
VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE,
AT LEXINGTON,
ON THE 4TH OF JULY, 1864.

BY B. J. BAGGOTT.

NEW YORK: J. H. RAVENEL, 1864.



ADDRESSES

GAYLORD—You will pardon me in so doing, in regarding the substance of my letter accepting the position I occupy to-day—I have obeyed your call rather for the opportunity it affords me of expressing the deep interest I feel in your institution than from any hope of making an adequate return for the compliment you have paid me. And without affectation I may say that I labor under a double embarrassment in fulfilling this engagement. Many years—I need not say how many—have elapsed since I left College, and how often you will be better able than now to appreciate the limitations of a teacher more accustomed to confer than this thoughts with Nature in the fields than among galleries—to appear before those whose active acquaintance with literature enables them to detect the most anachronism in history or the slightest lapse in the classics, especially on the subject of which I now claim to be very sure-footed.

But I feel bound to start the record of a literary institution, and still to be faithful to the propriety of coming to speak to you as a literary man, and as an occupation teaches them to be so, a literary and not a popular. I could not bear that in my presence the great literary body of you should be as distracted as the common school is reported to be to Henry Percy—I think I know that the student body of these approaches are competent to follow a speech of any sort of arguments, and I am sure that you will judiciously and wisely paid an attempt to do so, and that you will be aided in the waving the fullness of your own knowledge to step as the gentlemen to the right of the audience will be engaged to attend.

Our country is a country where regularity of hours is a necessity, and where the habits of mind are such as to render it difficult to follow the directions of an orator.

more — may not halt so well as the two daughters of Rockbridge. Gibbon says somewhere that he was better able to write the decline and fall of the Roman empire, from having served for a short time in the Hampshire militia. But whatever of clearness this may have added to his luminous page, I do not feel that my martial experience, embraced in a single appearance at a general muster, has at all increased my ability to address those who have — given the first watches of the night to the red planet Mars. — But while I acknowledge, and count for the most complete and absolute ignorance in military matters—that I have not skill to stretch a field of course across a post—that I am entirely unacquainted with the grand conception of Napoleon and the sublime reverses of Marshal Saxe, yet allow me to express my admiration of the wisdom which has induced our State to abandon the watchfully abused militia system, to concentrate its efforts upon a chosen militia force—to enable management to form a nucleus for an efficient citizen soldiery—by sending forth from time to time, a band of intelligent officers, well prepared in the theory of the trade, to direct the energies of the State, and to lead the citizen soldiery to the Freeman's cause.

[illegible]

us in wandering in thought and fancy over that grander heritage those patriots have bequeathed to us—or with the license granted usually on such an occasion, we might be pardoned for extending our gaze and seeking to

*Piercing with a sword's point
Where Hannibal Perch'd—Tiber's Head
Spent all her splendours—

But I think we can spend our time just now more profitably in running the shorter lines of our smaller, but goodly heritage—and find our account in treasuring the advice of Dundas to Pitt when the latter, walking rather unsteadily after dinner, was speaking prosily about the balance of power. — Hang Europe's balance: mind your own.

It seems to me, my friends, that we busy ourselves too much with these things already—that there is a stronger wish to set the world to rights, than to keep our own houses in order. I would not wish of course to discourage an enlightened acquaintance with current history, or seek to check investigation in all proper and legitimate directions. But I think that all sober-minded people will agree with me in saying that there is too great a tendency in the present age to expansiveness at the expense of profundity—that tinsel and veneering are too readily accepted in the place of solid mahogany and pure gold—that the broad views we hear so much of only encourage shallow thinking—that quid-nuncs are increasing more rapidly than intelligent citizens—and that the electric telegraph that mad gossip as Falstaff would have called it, is too true a type of an age that I greatly fear would rather have the latest piece of slander flashed along the wires, than to be assured of the recovery of the lost decade of Livy—and boasts acquaintance of the seat of war in Europe that it does not possess of the map of its own country.

Nor do I intend to weary you with any thing more than an incidental allusion to that other exciting interest of the day—that morbid philanthropy and calculating humanity which takes a fugitive slave for its hero, craves a city in flames where the constitution is obeyed, appeals to a higher law for revenge, and

and with cowardly terror to a lower law, the protection—and the sword—with blood on its hands and scripture on its lips, to lift the assassin's knife and light the incendiary torch, in the name of a meek and lowly Saviour. I turn from these more exciting objects, because I feel, as I hope you do, that we can dwell for a time more pleasantly and profitably on matters nearer home. As you have stood upon some one of those lofty peaks by which you are surrounded, and have strained the eye to embrace the grand panorama before you—the billowy hills, and long waving one of our blue Pyrenees—you have felt at length how much more pleasant it was to withdraw the aching gaze, and fix it on some quiet valley nestling beneath your glistening it may be with the golden harvest or the springing corn, and sharing with all the other evidences of peace and happiness—as though conscious that nature had laid its hand in blessing upon it. Even so let us withdraw our gaze from the great world for a time, to inspect our own loved State—to take counsel together, as to our duties—and how we may best perform the part assigned us in the service of a mother whose affections and bounties are well entitled for to the aid and comfort of all her children.

We all feel that Virginia does not occupy her proper position in the confederacy of States. We all regret that in the great march of material improvement she has lagged behind until she is hardly within hie of all of her sisters. I have felt it my duty to speak thus plainly whenever a fair opportunity occurred, and to return have been denounced as a crank—but I trust when you have heard me through your evil defects—and absolve me from such a title. It would be too easy, and certainly would be far more agreeable to speak of the noble bon train of hope and joy of the present and future of Virginia—regless over the errors of our system—the defects in our practice—and utter deplorable words to soothe our consciences of wasted power and neglected opportunities. But we have gone this too long and found an increase, not a mitigation of the evil. It is upon a languishing agriculture of Virginia that the abolitionist takes his bitterest sarcasms—not can we deny in the face of her census returns, that we have the melancholy farce enacted in a school of training institutions for men that cannot read

—that we have eighty thousand ready recruits for the Know Nothing party—if its name be the measure of its information—the our young men, the pride and strength of every land, are leaving us by thousands, torn like jewels from the diadem of Virginia, to deck the brows of more fortunate States—and that in every section of our broad commonwealth we have howling wildernesses that under happier auspices should be smiling with prosperity and laughing with abundance. I am told that a brighter day is dawning upon us. I am happy to believe it, and have myself proudly proclaimed it—but it is our duty to see that it is something longer than a polar winter's day—that we shall make a sustained and not a mere gulfanic effort—that we shall act not from the sheer necessity of the moment, but from a higher, sterner, and more continuous sense of duty.

It becomes us, then, to investigate as clearly as possible the defects which have led to the past decline—to promote the present tendency to advancement—and thus endeavor to learn and to remember: what makes a nation happy, and what keeps it so." I beg leave to say in advance that I am only seeking to set your own minds to work upon this subject. I have not come to you to-day with any elaborately planned system—any patent panacea for our ills. I have no faith in mere ephemeral associations which propose to regenerate a country by administering a draught, or by withholding it. I do not believe in building a house upon a nest, or defending a fort with a log cabin, or launching a seventy-ton ship with only one mast. I trust the day is far distant when generals and religion at Virginia will be only statutory. I trust we shall be long exempted from the sectary systems under which the individual withers, and thereby his race and his race's Empire. I go to gentlemen as Virginians, and only let myself be every thing that pertains to the commonwealth of your native State. I would say, however, of these commonwealths, whose inevitable tendencies are to the ruin of the present and the future—when proposing to substitute a system of universal education, and a universal moral duty, we do so like the offering of a whole burnt offering, and not like a patchwork of scraps and partial atonements.

At the present day there is an eagerness to do good, and a willingness to be controlled, and a willingness to be controlled by

every subject—to organize every man's household for him—almost as Sheridan has it to make us start by rule, and blush by example. I believe this spirit of interference to be at total variance with true rational freedom, whether civil or religious. Every civil or religious freedom is an easy freedom for this spirit of interference to pass from one to the other. Having settled a man's condition in that world, it would inevitably undertake to prescribe his destiny in the next. And this wild common-sense reform we have still time and light enough to look to the compass by which we have steered so long, and to recall the fact that the old Anglo-Saxon notion of liberty was that of the greatest individual freedom compatible with the interest of society—to appeal to neither neighbor nor State, and that it could do without—and while it punished crime promptly and sternly, did not seek to amend the Decalogue, nor waste its energies in the effort to settle that vast multitude of questions which a higher wisdom had decreed should be decided only between man and his God. Individualism, I repeat, is the characteristic of all true freedom, whether civil or religious. I do not, of course, use this word in that selfish sense which would make the interests of individuals superior to the common interests of society—but in that higher sense which shall make each member of a community feel that under Divine Providence he has a work to perform—one greater, some less. The parable which tells us of the distribution of the talents shows us in the very inequality of the distribution that it is to individual energy we must look for the greatest achievement. There is no warrant in that parable for communism, co-partnership philanthropy. Constituted as we are for different purposes and with different powers, man can only reach his highest development under that system which not only allows, but encourages, the full display of each power and mind, and the warmest effort of every sympathetic heart.

Under this it may be suggested, as I have been answered that in America at least there is but little evidence of the tendency to centralization, the disposition to substitute governmental action for necessary exertion. I wish I could think so. I wish I could but see eyes and close my mind against the morbidly convic-

tion that as a people we look too much to the State for aid—that we wait too supinely for others to do for us what we could—and should—do better and far more promptly for ourselves. Candor I think will declare that we are too lazy and too dependant. One illustration must suffice. Look at our system of internal improvements. Our legislatures have expended money enough, if properly administered, to have covered the whole State with a network of improvements, radiating in every direction, and enabling Virginia to extend her arms and embrace all her children. Instead of this, what do we behold? What have we to show for our money but splendid failures and magnificent abortions? We have been Titans in commencing, but alas! we have been but pigmies in concluding. An ancient apothegm warns us that we should commit the beginning of every great action to Argus with his hundred eyes, and its completion to Briareus with his hundred hands—but I fear with us the rule is just exactly reversed. Briareus commences, then folds his many arms and sits down with Argus, to look on, and speculate as to the probable completion of the work. Virginia for the past ten or fifteen years has but acted the part of the over-fond and foolish mother, and instead of exercising her judgment, has in too many instances only impaired the patrimony of her children, by gratifying every idle whim and impertinency, and conflicting caprice. She has attempted to give substance to the dream of the visionary—she has been too ready to give the selfish credit for patriotism—with characteristic parsimony, and recklessness, has been prompt to spend while there was a dollar in the purse, and to borrow when there was not—until at last, released from her credulity, for I trust she can no longer be so, she finds that not one single great work is finished, except in the highly excited imaginations of the highly colored, or sayings of the projectors—that she is a garden with every man a tree—her people still separated and divided—poor cases between her towns and wrangling among her counties—her resources undeveloped—some of the fairest portions of her territory incorporated and ceded or made tributary to other States, and that after all her efforts and expenditures she must still look to the future for her greatness, and to the past for her renown. I am told that the individual agency

to act— if citizens could never have accomplished what we see around us. Perhaps it could not—certainly it would have cost more wisdom in not attempting so much. To the argument that private capital was not equal to such a burden, there is the obvious answer that the citizens of the State must pay the debt at last—and that the work will be finished sooner, and the debt more promptly paid where personal interest and active individual agency are the spurs to exertion. And we have the facts that in Georgia—a State originally not better supplied with capital than ourselves, the works of improvement constructed by private companies are finished and paying handsomely—while the only road there which is doing badly is that built upon State account. I honestly believe that Virginia would this day be in a better condition if without one mile of railroad she were without debt. We might then hope that instead of dissipating her energies and pouring forth her treasures for no to waste, or worse but the desert, she might profit by the sad experience of other States, and of the Federal Government that politicians are the worst road makers in the world—that she would determine to work through her citizens, and not by her Legislature. We might then hope that one channel would be opened—our grand Aorta, along which might flow the life blood of our people in her eighty heart.

It may seem inappropriate to such an occasion to dwell upon this thing—and yet it cannot be wrong to warn you, Virginians of the greatest danger threatening your native State. I should be untrue to myself, and to you if I failed to give utterance to the fear that oppresses me—that even the corrupting system of Internal Improvements, as projected in Virginia, patriotism has been weakened—that love and devotion to duty are taking the place of a noble and lofty State pride. And unless Virginia determines speedily to overthrow the corrupt system of further appropriations, and by the more effectual remedy of calling for interests in the principal works, and then appealing to the sense of combination against the Treasury, it requires no prophet to tell the melancholy result. We can but recollect the voice of wealthier commonwealths—we can but look forward with dread to that hour which has come to others, and may come to

—when hope deferred shall at length make the heart sick—when an overburdened people shall forget the clear renown used to wear—when multiplied disasters shall at length suggest dishonor—when with works unfinished, with faith broken, and credit gone—Reputation shall come at last with her black rush to finish the picture—come to add shame to grief, and instant ruin.

You feel inclined, with noble impulse, to say this can never be. It is for you in part, as it is the duty of every Virginian, who links his own personal honor with the credit of his State to say it shall not be. Every thing should be done to encourage the particular friends of the larger works in their present noble efforts to complete their improvements on their own credit and from their own resources. And when this is accomplished, we may dismiss all fears. It will be easy to quiet and crush those smaller cornorants whose existence depended upon the success of the larger—and we shall reap the higher profit in the valuable lesson that individual energy is a stronger force than legislative action, and the industry of citizens a better capital than State subscription.

In speaking to you of these matters I beg you to believe that I have a higher motive than that of mere criticism. I have dwelt on it for a time, as the most striking illustration of the position I have assumed, and the lesson I would meditate. It is far very far from my purpose to utter wholesale condemnations against the friends of Federal Improvements, a class that includes our most enlightened and purest men. It is, on the contrary, the corrupt and corrupting system that I would lay open, and all Virginians. There are many fears that the State should not interfere with, and this is true. The canal and river of England warns us that even when a body of very good men are interested what frauds may be perpetrated in the prosecution of public works, and the late developments in Northern railway matters show that even our noblest brethren are not exempted from the danger of over-issues.

Our system has as yet escaped the imputation, at least the proof of criminality, and has disarmed resentment by a full confession of folly. Many, perhaps most of the evils of this system,

have sprung from an utter ignorance and an entire consequent neglect of the true interests of the State. And I have come to ask you, among other things, to do what I fear too many of our legislators have failed to do—to spread the map of Virginia before you—to trace out not only her dotted boundaries and her pencilled shores, but to study her condition, her wants, and her resources—to bend your head to catch the pleadings of her feeble voice, and then, with noble resolution and high resolve, here in the purer atmosphere, and amid so grander scenery, to consecrate yourselves to her service. And I do let me entreat you in all kindness and confidence to conscience your life of duty by casting off or repelling that false pride so common in our State, which is prone rather to exact than to render honor. I hope and believe that the day of morbid thinking and miserable working is past—that the time is at hand when the youths of Virginia will deem it no degradation to earn an honorable independence in the cause of their State by the strength of their own good right arms—will believe that idleness is not meritorious, and labor not humiliating—that an embrowned cheek is no derogation to the gentleman, and that a hard-earned hand may be but the outer pledge of a warmer heart. If you value the nobler parts of the Virginia character, its true nobility of soul, its scorn of meanness, its high-toned honor, and all those other social and moral qualities which have so long adorned it—qualities that its enemies have pretended to deride, but before which they have ever stood abashed—if you would preserve and transmit these, you must early learn that their true basis is independence. You must learn to seek other goals to wealth and fame than in the walks of overcrowded professions, or along the precarious and slippery paths of politics. Do not think I have come to read you a homily against ambition. I would myself suspect the sincerity of any man who would proclaim himself insensible to the good opinion of his fellow men. There is much truth in the old scholastic aphorism—that he who lives wholly detached from his kind must be either an angel or a devil. But what I would impress upon you is, first, that however glittering the prize, it is but a false ambition which does not hold self-respect far above any office, in popular or governmental gift, and secondly, that if

office, in the only form in which you should accept it, is withheld, if it be not offered without solicitation, and won without dishonor, it is still in your power with talent and perseverance to gain high and enduring distinctions such as midnight canusses cannot give, nor scheming politicians take away. We have a signal proof of what a man may accomplish for himself, in our distinguished fellow citizen Matthew F. Maury. We proudly claim him as a Virginian by birth, but freely relinquish him to the world of science for its adoption. We see in him a man whom kings have sought to decorate and nations have learned to honor, as one who deems knowledge his own fame than for the good of mankind. His Wind and Current Chart, second only in value to the compass, has taught the mariner in every sea the hidden currents of the winds and currents of the mountain bulwars, and has made him a hero that is uttered with gratitude on every pass of the storm and borne in thunder on every tide that sweeps the ocean's deep.

It is granted to but few to rise to eminence in the political world—it can not often, in the words of the celebrated Senator, that a man can marry his name to a great principle—be a champion of the oratorical but effective cause, and at the same time be frequently visited on idle or chivalric errands, and exposed to trial. The heroic conflicts of a patriot are not the daily life of a statesman. The statesman's life is a warfare of a different kind—more continuous and plodding, yet less glorious—more of the daily grind and drudgery of the political arena, and more of the petty and unheroic details of the new world of the statesman—more of the unheroic details of the new world of the statesman.

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abundance and loveliness covers the valley with flowers, clothes the plain with golden harvests, and crowns the hill with noble forests.

It is this directness of aim and purpose, the diversified employment which has given to England so many of her men in the different walks of Literature or Science or Art, and of every branch of industry. By these multiplied and blended powers she has laid every clime under tribute, and made her little island the centre of Civilization—the vitality heart by whose pulsation the arteries of the health and strength of every commercial country are kept, and on the great stream of which in later times every nation has drawn the first draught of civil liberty and religious freedom. My prayer is that this war-torn country, profiting by her example, and warmed by her example, may exceed even her strength and even her glory—may take a proportion of the country of promise responsible for no ordinary measure for its destiny—and enrich all the elements of material and moral grandeur Virginia shall determine to perform her proper part in the great drama. To effect this I return as to a chorus in saying that each of her sons must determine to fulfil his whole duty.

If his thoughts are turned to literature, let him with De Quincey invoke the genius of common sense to keep him from sacrificing his peace, his bodily, and intellectual health to a life of showy emptiness, of pretence, of noise and of words, and to teach him how irremediably is the reputation of having produced even one work, though but in a lower department of art—such as the *Uncle of Wakefield*—which has given pleasure to myriads, than to have lived in the wonderment of a grazing crowd like a pope, a queen, or a potent master, with the tale of incredible attainments that tend to outstrip all as a goal which perish from the memory of posterity as soon as the man ceases to be in the grave.

So, by giving reason to the intellect, and by giving action and sense to the body, the man may become a citizen. And, this cannot be done without the aid of the sciences of Letters, then applied to the study of the history of the British Empire, and of the principles of the science of government, and of the science of

and that the more you expect to receive, the more you ought to give;—that you ought to pay your duty by way of interest to receive, and to be a help and encouragement therefore. It is this spirit which gives the noblest impulse to education—which teaches us that we have a right to perform as well as rights to be maintained. A clear purpose is necessary to perfect resolution, and one cannot will heaven's but little time to discuss the faults or envy the fortune of others. Prospering ourselves we shall be willing to see others prosper. The author from whom I have already quoted will remark that a good scheme of study—or of business—will improve itself to be such by this one test—that it will exalt, as powerfully as it will appropriate—it will be a system no less of repulsion than of attraction. Once thoroughly occupied by the deep and genial pleasures of an elevating pursuit, you will be indifferent to all others that had previously teased you with a transient excitement. His illustration of this fact perhaps will strike you. He says it is just as we sometimes see a young man superficially irritated as it were with wandering fits of liking for three or four ladies at once, which he is absurd enough to call 'being in love'—but once profoundly in love, he never makes such a mistake again, all his feelings after *that* being absorbed into a sublime unity. I hope you will try both of De Quincey's tests—that of faithful attention to elevating pursuits—and this of concentration of feelings into a sublime unity. He is so untrue to his own noble nature as to contend in another portion of his works that marriage is inconsistent with the greatest triumphs of life—but this must have been uttered in a moment of irritation when his wife had just taken his opium or laudanum bottle from him. At least I hope I may be pardoned for differing from such high authority—and for saying—not in the spirit of idle compliment to my countrywomen—but in the truth and sincerity of my heart, that an early marriage as it is confessedly the secret pledge of happiness, so be it not too early, the strongest assurance of its success. The eye of a true companion has been the light which has guided many a noble mind from straying—the gentle hand of woman has exerted power to lift the student man along the steep of life—no, whatever it may be, the proud and lonely man may as well wait for the light of heaven as that

the most broken fortune—and the highest honors still lack their brightest charm when unshared by the noble and devoted wife.

And when, under these bright influences, we have encouraged a nobler love of independence and a higher source of action—in the resultant of these radiant and mighty forces we shall find what we have needed so long—a Virginia spirit and a spirit in Virginia. But that spirit must be aroused speedily if we would not have the peculiar type of Virginia character blotted out forever. And I confess for myself that I would consider her prosperity too dearly bought if effected by foreign hands. Though the State were covered with improvements—though each hall hour were proclaimed by the warning note of the rushing train—though populous cities and fertile fields should give us assurance of a mighty prosperity, I should still mourn the loss of that type of Man and Woman which belong peculiarly to Southern States, as the artist mourned for the blush of the sixth maiden. It is to preserve these that I would have the sons of Virginia become the geni of her prosperity, and be her strength, her power, her safety and her pride. I know it is very much the fashion now-a-days to talk in swelling phrase of loving your country first and your State afterwards, but I would reverse this process, for I have ever felt that I should be a better American as I was a truer Virginian. Not that I would encourage a cold and selfish isolation of feeling—not that I would wish a severance of this Union while there is hope of its remaining a Union of free and equal States. I feel that upon its preservation depend the brightest hopes that ever dawned upon humanity. I feel that to ask what the North could do without the South is as heartless as to ask how much of vitality would be left in the quivering limb when severed from the parent trunk—as idle as to ask how the fragments might sparkle when the diamond had been shattered. So long as we can believe that the insults and injuries heaped upon men are the effect of a few active turkeys perpetrated in opposition to the feelings of a majority of the Northern people, let us endeavor to turn back the ancient Dial.

my fortune a few days since to hear the address of the distinguished Irish patriot John Mitchell before the literary societies of the University of Virginia. That speech is already published. You will read it of course, and judge for yourselves—and judge too if I do him injustice in what I am about to say. At least we shall all agree, after reading it, that whatever of positive evil or of morbid sensitiveness English Law and social polity may have produced in Ireland, it has not degraded either noble intellect, nor quenched the fire of her burning eloquence. The limits and purposes of this address would not allow me, if I desired it, to discuss at any length the doctrines of Mr. Mitchell's speech. It falls in with my purpose however to warn you against what I esteem to be its gloomy tendencies, and to enter my protest in advance against its depressing influences. I venture then to say, that if I have not mistaken the drift of that speech, I would not hold its philosophy. I would not have my brother Virginians follow in its faith—no, not for all the gold of that Australia in whose wilds he nursed these bitter fancies.

The purpose of his speech, as I understood it, was to prove, that the Civilization of the nineteenth century is hollow and heartless—that it is utterly impossible to improve the whole race of man, the *genus homo*—that the world is governed by what I must call the screw principle—that improvement and elevation in one nation is certain to be compensated by the contemporaneous decay and degradation of some other race, and to be repaid more over by ages of evil against years of good—that even the best and bravest men act with no reference to posterity, to the world—that war and not peace, evil and not good, are the qualities of this world and of woman's world—that therefore, the confirmed facts established that human progress, so the name of the material world, is a cycle, the nations in their course continue to plunder the posterity, with a plunderer's hope, and to be in turn plundered, the nations in their course continue to be swayed by the same inferiority. So, you see, friends we were to receive the philosophy. Rather would we have this gloomy picture before us, than the warm glow of the truth, that civilization, however imperfect, is the only human ideal, the noblest and most beautiful of all that we can reach, and that it is our duty to strive for it, and to improve it, and to make it more and more perfect. (Mr.

the sentimental sculptress, who is — without the knowledge of her Art — expounding, on the banks of the Clyde — to the living, not to the dead, and to the friends of true benevolence. — Will not Mr. Mitchell put as a — his biting irony — to the point, where we recall a picture of peace — of a great nation — in a land with the benignity to the calls of suffering humanity — to open its armed vessels of the labouring — it will to fight the sea with the aid of the rushing element — to cast its nets, and to catch its desolate people from the coils of despair, and the gloom of wretchedness, to forget their woes, revive their energies, and recover their happiness, in a new home — not under a brighter heaven. — Let the nineteenth century be credited for the movement of benevolence in the right direction, and to witness the right move.

We may agree with Mr. Mitchell that physical progress is not true civilization. But we should no more reject its many-voiced, hundred-handed messengers, because of occasional misapplication, than we should reject the steam-engine because there are fatal collisions, and frightful accidents.

This poor nineteenth century, soon what he called the sixties, may not be so bad after all as he deems it. A view might be the very deceptions we derive may be the truest evidence of moral improvement, the forerunner of the typical ideal few, to the virtue of the many. Its healthy sentimental talk may sometimes be the more explanation of cruelty and oppression, but let us hope that with the more it may after a time acquire the substance of benevolence. Indeed, if we will cast aside our bitterness, I think we may find plenty of evidence of a larger intelligence, a bolder and warmer humanity, just good and not retarded here and there by frauds and crimes and injustice, but never wholly extinct. Each age has its beam of heaven's principle. The present one is marked by an advancement towards an almost unrestricted intercourse between the nations of the earth. New races and new elements have been developed, whose coming none can foresee, and whose results no one can predict. The whole human family seems to be in motion. Even China acknowledges a bond of union with the outside barbarians, and pouts her arrogant nose no longer in scorn at such nations, that we are

to the world—open one strange hyacinthine chest in the publication of our laws—Japan, the hermit of nations, opens its ports and solves the mystery of centuries—Steam strains ten thousand wheels—new native powers are sought, subdued, and made the viewless ministers of our will—Nature opens two of our strong boxes in California and Australia—continents are traversed—regions are united—great and stolid exhibitions are held—

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, 1876

Mr. Mitchell will pardon this last item, because we live in glass houses ourselves and cannot throw stones, and though the nations went to war after all, it was none the sooner for having attended the exhibition. Be this as it may, we are certainly justified in the belief that this grand movement over the face of the earth betokens more than commerce, and vindicates the hope that men hereafter will be united by a brighter nexus than cash payments.

We must reject Mr. Mitchell's cyclical theory, because we see an inchoate improvement throughout the whole family of man—because, on his own principles, it *will* be the great regenerator. Europe and Asia too bid fair just now to be fully restored to their pristine vigor by the most extensive material cutting of mankind's throats—because, against his will, our nation has risen here on this continent without any sensible degradation to any other country—but chiefly because it is based upon a false analogy drawn from the physical world. It would lead us to believe that there is no more stimulus than to open no more of patriotism than of carbon in a battery. We either incline to the belief that moral qualities, such as religious principles, are capable of indefinite extension, or that they are not. Upon the latter, we most class this thing of the exhibition exhibition to a quarter of the earth with that other thing of the same name, which claims to be the largest exhibition in the world—and the Christian truth people, and the people of the world with them, has lately graduated to the Atlantic Ocean, and so the Congress of the United States is not to be held in any city, but

continent and all the islands of the sea, shall be adorned with grander Coliseums and more solemn Pantheons, reared by the hands of a nobler people, and echoing the hymns of a purer faith. These may be the visions of a too sanguine hope—but in the energy they impart, and the activity they induce, are the powers and qualities which purify and elevate. If a mournful catalogue of failures is drawn from history, I answer that we should stand by the grave of dead empires, for a nobler purpose than to copy epitaphs for the living—and choose rather to utter inspiring words at the head of the advancing columns, than bid them trail their banners and falter in their march, under the wailing notes, the wild coronach, of grief and degradation.

Equally shall we reject the bloody dogma that war chiefly calls forth the finer, tenderer, more generous qualities of manhood and womanhood. In the highest style of art and beauty, with the warmth of a lover painting his mistress, Mr. Mitchel has drawn for us the picture of a Carthaginian maiden at the moment when her city was beleaguered by the Romans: "she ring off her long raven hair and knotting into bowstrings, lay, and exulting in her beautiful, benighted Pagan soul, to think that silken tress will send the winged death hissing to some Roman heart." But we must ask Mr. Mitchel to turn from these tresses, glistening like Berenice's hair, and omitting the general items of horror) to debit the account with Asdrubal's cruelties, and note with especial care the wholesale infanticide committed by Asdrubal's wife without the temptation of a burial society. Even his "war goddess" with her premature but pathetic boldness, must divide her glory with the women of those African tribes oppressed by Carthage—who in these "once Punic" wars tore the "rich jewels from their Ethiopians," to defray the expenses of their amusements—and would doubtless have offered their "raven hair" but for the sad reflection that the shortness of the staple would have made it unavailing. Nor must Mr. Mitchel fail to remember that the commerce he so much admires gave Carthage of the "people her greatest glory and strength, while you swept her from the earth, and laid her in anathema on her own destruction.

Nations do not have been done in war by men, and woman has troubled and acted with her own passion—but utter her peace

witnessed the tenderness of Siqui with its bloody toil, and triumphed by costlier sacrifices than a maiden's hair. I must confess that as yet wars are sometimes necessary—but I am vexed with sadness what Mr. Mitchell proclaims with exultation—and in parting with him, I beg leave in all kindness to commend to his reflection, these eloquent and truthful words of a late writer:—“War is the inexorable foe of all progress intellectual, social and spiritual. The man who can slay his brother, who encourages another to do it, renounces his godlike character, and returns to the community of the hyæna and the tiger. Civilization stands still when armies take the field; it retrogrades when they leave it. Humanity shrinks at the trumpet of battle, and religion stoops abashed in presence of the weary, withered hands, and the sovereign with a bloody mantle.”

[illegible]

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The commonest of these—which a cold agnostic might propose to substitute for religion—is fatal in this—they draw no distinction between matter and spirit—they take it for granted that grand analogy which tells us that as there is a centre of our earth towards which all matter gravitates—so there is above a point towards which all thoughts—all affections—all whatever stirs this mortal frame—inclines. These systems are the oil-pung of the vanity or pride of man—sometimes even of good men who are unsatisfied thinkers—who mislead others and gain only imitation for themselves in their search for truth or who are always finding their buildings falling about them because they have either based them on treacherous sands, or have failed to use the great corner stone.

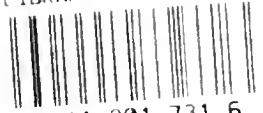
There is another class against which youth with its untamed fancy—and its undiluted heart—should be especially warned. I have not yet forgotten how many false lights glare around the path of the young man—how for instance he is startled by the brilliant blasphemies of Shelley—and bewildered by his mockeries, ringing with the wild echo of a devil's laughter. I know how young men, in the brilliancy of his thoughts, have forgotten if they have not excused the errors of his life—have forgotten the neglect—perhaps the cruelty—which led a lovely wife to the commission of suicide—his outrages upon domestic purity, his defiance of the laws of God and man. As I would warn you against his life—so I would save you from his doctrines and his fate. For search his works if you will—gather together his choicest blasphemies—repeat the mightiest of his Satanic defiances—and when the hurricane of affliction weeps over you, they will avail you as little as they did him, then impious youth—when in the bay of Spezia—and a fleet of vessels, his bark alone was bound down by the gale—when the God he had reviled seemed justified in his wrath—when we may fancy that as the waters were closed over that man's head in that moment of mortal agony, he heard the sound of that awful anthem—“I will destroy your vanity, and mock when you utter scorn.”

They, they are people who think there is nothing contracting in sin—no and no restraint of the pleasures of the world—no restraint of the propensities of ambition. Religion must

he confessed is sometimes made almost hideous by its teachers—we are called to shudder beneath a God of horror instead of lifting our eyes to a God of mercy—This should not be. A true and healthful spirit teaches us that this world, this bright and beautiful world, this portion of God's great plan, was intended for the pleasure and profit of man. And whilst a pure truth tells us of duty and submission, it restricts us from no pleasure and no prize which a legitimate ambition would covet. It does not diminish the range of the loftiest intellect—it does not check the soarings of the brightest genius, for immortality is the noblest thought of which the mind is capable. It did not stay Newton in his starry flight—it placed no hindrance in that radiant path along which he advanced, till, reaching the line which mortal may not pass, he seemed to need but one step more to place him in the presence of his God. It was the fervor of a christian poet that built with lofty verse the noblest epic of the world—and imparted that genial warmth and sympathy to the myriad-minded Shakespere which gave him "a knowledge of the human heart second only to that of Him who made it." No thought but immortality can "fill to fulness" the mind of man. Our own Webster as he looked back upon a career rich in all the trophies of time, acknowledged that even his gigantic intellect wanted its crowning ornament in wanting a knowledge of the great Intercessor—in preparing his own epitaph he made no record of his honors, or of the "great legacies of thought" bequeathed to his country—but traced in simple grandeur his deep conviction of the truths of christianity.

With all these evidences, and clouds of noble witnesses, I am sure you will not waste your time in attempting to untie the knots that tangle human creeds"—satisfied with the ethics, you need not puzzle yourselves with the metaphysics of religion—and may I ask you not to try Christianity by the rule of the ear, as the farmers and herdsmen do earthly wisdom? A pagan philosopher says somewhere that the human mind is a "house of partitions of superiority and inferiority," with the partitions of others. But the highest partition in the mind is the religious gladness of heart that, with the religious eye, we see the world as it really is, and say, "Hail, new world, thou shalt be free!"

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